INTRINSIC AND CONTEXTUAL EXPERIENCES OF

MASCULINITY THREAT: THE ROLE OF PRECARIOUS MANHOOD BELIEFS

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ABSTRACT

INTRINSIC AND CONTEXTUAL EXPERIENCES OF MASCULINITY THREAT: THE

ROLE OF PRECARIOUS MANHOOD BELIEFS

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Previous research has found that men who adhere to precarious manhood beliefs (PMB) experience and respond to masculinity threat in a multitude of ways. In the present research, male participants imagine a female hiring manager, who perpetrates a masculinity threat, is offering them a position. In one condition, they begin negotiating a salary with the hiring manager. In the second condition, they begin negotiating a salary with a female human resources manager who did not witness or perpetrate a masculinity threat. The present study explores the experience of this threat by testing two competing hypotheses: (a) the intrinsic threat hypothesis, that suggests masculinity threats for men high in PMB are experienced as a threat to one's stable definition of self and, (b) the contextual threat hypothesis, which suggests that threats to masculinity only threaten men's view of the self within a specific relational situation or context. Neither the intrinsic or contextual threat hypotheses were supported. The results revealed no significant main or interaction effects of PMB, masculinity threat, or manager condition on symbolic aggression. A significant interaction effect of masculinity threat and manager condition was found on the manager favorability ratings.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Guys, you don't have to act "manly" to be considered a man; you are a man, so just be yourself.

Don't let society make you believe you have to prove your masculinity to anyone."

— <u>Miya Yamanouchi</u>, <u>Embrace Your Sexual Self: A Practical Guide for Women</u>

Social science research guided by Vandello et al.'s (2008) Precarious Manhood Theory (PMT) validates and extends the cultural observation illustrated in the quote by Miya Yamanouchi. According to both folk wisdom and PMT, masculinity is socially constructed rather than biologically determined (Levant, 2011). Across cultures, people define womanhood as a permanent, stable part of one's identity that is not subject to loss through gender norm violations (Levant, 2011). In contrast, the cultural definition of manhood is not stable and permanent, but rather is tenuous, elusive, fleeting, and subject to loss through gender norm violations. As young, children, boys learn that they "attain" manhood by continually reaffirming to themselves and to others that they possess the qualities society defines as necessary for "being a man" (Heinrich, 2013; Vandello et. al, 2008). From this fluid view of masculinity, males learn to become vigilant in guarding against masculinity threats and reaffirming masculinity in response to threats.

Although societies generally define manhood as more fluid, dynamic and less stable than womanhood, PMT proposes that males differ in the degree to which they hold beliefs about the precariousness of manhood. Thus, men differ in the degree to which they vigilantly guard against masculinity threats and the degree to which they attempt to reaffirm masculinity in response to threats.

In the proposed research, I examine men's responses to masculinity threats as a function of the degree to which they hold precarious manhood beliefs. Furthermore, my research expands previous investigations by addressing novel questions about how men experience masculinity threat. Specifically, I address whether masculinity threats are experienced intrinsically, threatening men's stable definition of self, or whether they are experienced contextually, threatening only how men view themselves in the context of the specific relationship or setting in which the threat occurred.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Emotional Experience of Masculinity threat

According to Pleck's (1981, 1995) Gender Role Strain Paradigm (GRSP), gender norms create pressure for men to behave in gender-consistent ways. Furthermore, when men violate gender norms, they experience stress and anxiety described as gender role discrepancy strain (Pleck, 1981; 1995). Supporting this notion, Bosson, Prewitt-Freilino, & Taylor (2005) asked participants to visualize themselves acting in a way that was inconsistent with their gender role. Men who imagined that they were performing a typical "feminine" task reported experiencing feelings of heightened discomfort and fear of being misclassified as gay. Feelings of discomfort were alleviated when allowed to reaffirm their status as a heterosexual male.

Additionally, Vandello et al., (2008) illustrated how threats to masculinity due to gender role violations result in increased feelings of discomfort and anxiety. This was demonstrated by having men complete word fragments to form words associated with anxiety or words that were not associated with anxiety. Male and female participants were required to complete word fragments, such as STRE_ _ (stress), SHA_E (shame), and _eak (weak). Men who were assigned to a gender threat condition completed the word fragments to form anxiety related words more often compared to women in a gender threat condition and men and women who were in a gender non-threat condition. These findings illustrate that when men experience a threat to masculinity, anxiety and other threat related emotions become more accessible.

Affective consequences that result from masculinity threats are not limited to anxiety and stress. Aggressive thoughts have also been demonstrated to arise due to experiencing masculinity threats. For example, Vandello et al., (2008) demonstrated how manhood threats resulted in an

increase of physically aggressive thoughts. Similarly to assessing anxiety, participants completed word fragments to form either aggressive or non-aggressive words such as GU_(gun), _ _ RDER (murder), and STA_(stab). Males who were assigned to a condition where they had their masculinity threatened more often completed the word fragments to result in physically aggressive words. This indicated that when they had a threat made to their masculinity, they demonstrated higher accessibility to physically aggressive thoughts.

Defensive Reactions to Masculinity threat

When men experience a threat to masculinity, they seek to reaffirm it order to reduce gender role anxiety, especially in public domains. Research has shown that men respond defensively to masculinity threats by (a) accentuating the differences between masculinity and femininity (Bosson & Michniewicz, 2013; Glick et al., 2007; Glick et al., 2015), (b) engaging in physical aggression (e.g., Bosson et al., 2009), (c) engaging in symbolic aggression (e.g., Nechaeva, Koutchaki, & Shepperd, 2015) and (d) discriminating against those who violate gender norms (e.g., Kroeper, Sanchez, & Himmelstein, 2014; Weaver & Vescio, 2015).

Accentuating differences between masculinity and femininity. Research supports the notion that when threatened, men become more sensitive to gender norms. Experimental research has provided support for this argument. Men exhibited a heightened tendency to reject feminine traits when they are reminded of the precarious nature of manhood (Bosson & Michniewicz, 2013). Furthermore, men who experienced a gender threat exhibited an increased likelihood to reject feminine traits in other men (Glick et al., 2007; Hunt et al., 2015).

Bosson and Michniewicz (2013) asked participants to engage in a short writing task in which they had to recall a time in their life when something happened to them in front of others

that made them feel badly about their gender status (gender threat condition) or information about their daily schedule (non-threat). Participants in the threat condition then responded to questions regarding how masculine/feminine and how positive/negative the writing task made them feel. Initial findings explained that men tend to view gender as more dichotomized after being exposed to gender threat. A follow up study revealed that when men are provided with knowledge that their group is becoming more feminine, they display increased motivation to engage in activities that would restore their gender status.

Research conducted by Hunt, Carnaghi, Fasoli, and Cadinu (2015) explored the way that masculinity threats would alter interactions between masculine and feminine stereotyped gay men. They also explored if gay participants identified more with a masculine gay man after being threatened. They found that gay men showed less willingness to interact with a feminine gay man due to fear of being misclassified as such and identified more with a masculine gay man after being subject to a gender threat (Hunt et al., 2015).

Glick et al. (2007) displayed similar findings. Participants completed a personality test and received feedback that either threatened or did not threaten their masculinity. The threatening feedback indicated that their personality was feminine; the non-threatening feedback indicated that it was masculine. Immediately following, participants completed a survey assessing attitudes toward subtypes of homosexuals, including effeminate gay men or masculine gay men. Findings demonstrated that threatened participants reported higher rejection of the effeminate gay men compared to non-threatened participants. This effect was attenuated for judgments of masculine gay men.

Physical aggression as a response to masculinity threat. Men appear to define physical aggression as a culturally acceptable (gender-consistent) response to a threat (Bosson &

Vandello, 2011; Kalish & Kimmel, 2010; Weaver, Vandello, Bosson, & Burnaford, 2011).

Kalish and Kimmel (2010) suggests that a culture of hegemonic, socially dominant masculinity provides a framework that encourages men to respond to masculinity threats with physical aggression. Men are encouraged by their social and cultural scripts to use aggression as not only a way to affirm their masculine identity to themselves, but also as a way to confirm it to others. They are not only encouraged to behave aggressively as a means of proof, but they are provided with a sense of entitlement by social norms to use aggression.

Weaver et al. (2011) provided experimental support for this argument. Weaver et al. presented participants with a bogus police incident report that depicted an altercation between either two men or two women. Participants were then instructed to attribute the perpetrator's behaviors to either dispositional or situational factors. Male participants perceived the aggression perpetrated by a man as an acceptable response to the situation; women however did not. These findings suggest that physical aggression is part of men's (but not women's) cultural script for responding to threats.

Physical aggression can restore masculinity and reduce gender role anxiety resulting from masculinity threats. Bosson et al. (2009) instructed male participants to either braid hair on a mannequin's head (inducing gender threat) or to braid strands of rope (not inducing gender threat). After completing the threatening or non-threatening braiding activity, participants had the opportunity to engage in an aggressive activity (punch a punching bag) or non-aggressive activities (shoot basketball hoops, complete a puzzle). Men who experienced masculinity threat by braiding hair were more likely to choose to the aggressive activity compared to those who did not experience masculinity threat. Furthermore, men who experienced masculinity threat punched the punching bag with greater force compared to those who did not experience

masculinity threat. Finally, when men who had experienced masculinity threat exhibited punched the bag hard, they exhibited less anxiety.

Symbolic aggression as a response to masculinity threat. The social norms in many situations prohibit men from engaging in physical aggression in response to masculinity threats (Weaver, et al., 2011). The social norms in most workplaces, for instance, prohibit expressions of physical aggression. In such situations, men might engage in *symbolic aggression* rather than physical aggression in response to masculinity threats. Symbolic aggression involves the use of words and other nonverbal behaviors (e.g., facial or body gestures, tone of voice) to dominate or defeat someone (Rancer & Avtgis, 2006).

In research by Netchaeva, Kouchaki, & Sheppard (2015) male participants role-played as an employee being offered a position and a salary by either a male or female manager. Participants had the opportunity to counter-offer the salary and were told that the manager would be aware of their counter-offer and would respond. When men negotiated with a female manager, they exhibited symbolic aggression by responding with more assertive counter offers. Men responded with more symbolic aggression when negotiating with the female manager versus the male manager; they responded with more assertiveness when making counter offers. A second study revealed that men's assertive counter offers were a response to feelings of masculinity threat and not motivation to penalize the female manager for breaking gender norms.

Discrimination as response to masculinity threat. Men with precarious manhood beliefs clearly distinguish between the gender roles for men and women (Bosson & Michniewicz, 2011). Groups that violate gender role norms (e.g., women occupying positions of power over men, gay men and feminists) confuse or make ambiguous gender roles for men and women, and thus threaten men who hold precarious manhood beliefs.

Women in positions of power or authority additionally threaten men holding precarious manhood beliefs by making them feel inferior to a member of the "weaker sex" (Dahl, Vescio, & Weaver, 2015). Upon experiencing masculinity threats, men high in precarious manhood beliefs are especially likely to discriminate against women in positions of power and authority (Dahl et al., 2015; Mellon, 2013) and women who do not conform to traditional gender roles (Glick, Wilkerson, & Cuffe, 2015).

Dahl et al. (2015) administered a gender knowledge test to male participants and provided threatening results, scoring them closer to the female average or non-threatening results, scoring them closer to the male average. Participants then completed measures of public discomfort, anger, and ideological dominance. Threatened men showed greater concern over how they were being perceived by others, which predicted higher levels of anger and greater endorsement of ideological dominance over females. The ability to assert power over women allowed men to feel an increased sense of masculinity.

Men high in precarious manhood beliefs also discriminate against gay men as a defensive response to masculinity threats (Kroper, Sanchez, & Himmelstein, 2014; Weaver & Vescio, 2015). For instance, Kroeper, et al. (2014) found that men holding precarious manhood beliefs were less likely to intervene when witnessing discrimination against a gay man. By expressing tolerance of discrimination, they protected their identity as heterosexuals. O'Connor, Ford, and Banos (2017) further elaborate on these findings by demonstrating that men higher in PMB reported greater amusement with sexist and anti-gay humor (but not anti-Muslim or neutral humor) following a threat to masculinity. Moreover, following a masculinity threat, men higher in PMB expressed amusement with sexist and anti-gay humor *because* they believed it would reaffirm their masculinity. These findings thus suggest that sexist and anti-gay humor serve a

self-affirming function for men who possess higher PMB in situations that threaten one's masculinity.

The Experience of Masculinity Threat: Intrinsic versus Contextual Threat

Previous research supports the notion that the experience of masculinity threat in men high in PMB results in a negative emotional experience, giving rise to defensive reactions including both physical and symbolic aggression, and an increase in willingness to engage in discrimination toward out-groups that challenge gender norms. However, no previous research has explored how masculinity threats are experienced. One possibility is that men experience masculinity threats intrinsically, as threats to their stable definition of self. A second possibility is that men experience masculinity threats contextually, threatening only how they view themselves in the context of the specific relationship or setting in which the threat occurs.

Intrinsic threat hypothesis. According to Tajfel (1981) social identity is the part of one's self-concept derived from membership in social groups. Intergroup settings elicit comparisons with out-groups on valued dimensions (e.g., ''How does my masculinity compare to others in terms of strength and power?''). A fundamental proposition of social identity theory is that, in intergroup contexts, people ''strive to maintain or achieve a positive social identity'' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 16). This is accomplished by perceiving positive in-group distinctiveness through favorable social comparisons with relevant out-groups (e.g., ''As men, we have the greatest physical strength.''). Conversely, social identity is threatened when social comparisons reveal that one's in-group is negatively distinguished from relevant out-groups (e.g., ''The women's team beat the men's team in the weight lifting competition.''). Thus, people experience

social identity threat when they perceive that a salient social identity is at risk of being diminished in a given context (Logel et al., 2009; Steele, Spencer & Aronson, 2002).

Individuals view group membership as important to self-concept and derive stable, intrinsic meaning from their in-group status (Glick, Wilkerson, & Cuffe, 2015; Tajfel, 1981; Grieve & Hogg, 1999). Research conducted through the lens of the social identity theory explained that threats to one's social identity hold negative implications in regard to the way individuals are viewed within their social groups. Additionally, social identity threats, such as those to gender, encourage rejection by members of one's social group. Being rejected by a highly valued social group results in an intrinsic negative self-evaluation (Schmitt and Branscombe, 2001).

Furthermore, Slotter, Winger, and Soto (2015) conducted research that established a relationship between the loss of highly valued in-group status and a less stable self-concept. Their findings indicated that participants who highly identified with a social group experienced the greatest loss of self-concept clarity, along with a change in their self-concept and a reduction in self-esteem when their social group membership was threatened.

Collectively, this research suggests that men might experience masculinity threats intrinsically. Thus, one hypothesis is that for men high in PMB, masculinity threats affect men's intrinsic, stable definition of self.

Contextual threat hypothesis. It is possible that men experience threats to their masculinity not as an intrinsic threat to their self-concept, but rather as a threat to their definition of self in a particular context in which the threat occurs. That is, threats to masculinity only have meaning in relation to how they view themselves and how they perceive that others view them in a particular interpersonal relationship or context.

The idea that threats to self-concept are contextually bound was supported in research conducted by Brown (1998) regarding stigma as a contextual experience. Brown proposed that the diminishment or stigmatization of one's social group does not create an intrinsic, stable threat to one's definition of self, but rather a contextual threat experienced only within the social context in which the threat occurs.

Brown asked African-American participants to imagine themselves interacting with and being graded by either an African- or European-American teaching assistant for one assignment or many times over the course of an entire semester. Due to envisioning multiple evaluations over the course of the semester, African-American students believed that the European-American teaching assistant (but not the African-American teaching assistant) would judge them stereotypically. Consequently, African-American students reported less positive views of themselves only in the context of an imagined threat to social identity, that is, when imagining interacting with a European-American teaching assistant for an entire semester.

Brown's (1998) findings raise the possibility that men experience masculinity threats contextually rather than intrinsically. Thus, a second hypothesis is that for men high in PMB, masculinity threats affect their self-concept only in the context of the specific relationship or setting in which the threat occurs.

The Present Research

The present research tests two competing hypotheses about the experience of masculinity threat in men who adhere to PMB: the intrinsic threat hypothesis and the contextual threat hypothesis. The intrinsic threat hypothesis states that to the extent men are high in PMB masculinity threats should negatively affect their intrinsic, stable definition of self. In contrast,

the contextual threat hypothesis states, to the extent that men are high in PMB, masculinity threats only damage their self-concept only in the context of the specific relationship or setting in which the threat occurs.

Male participants first completed Vandello et al.'s (2008) PMB scale under the guise of a social attitudes survey. Then, they completed an allegedly unrelated role-play study in which they interacted with either one or two managers as a new employee on a job. In the context of this study, a female hiring manager provided participants with bogus feedback on a personality inventory that they have a feminine personality (Masculinity Threat condition) or no feedback on the personality inventory (No Threat condition).

Participants then negotiated a starting salary with either the female manager who perpetrated the masculinity threat (the hiring manager), or with a different female human resources manager, who did not perpetrate or witness the masculinity threat. Following Vandello et al. (2008), I measured symbolic aggression by recording how assertively participants negotiated their starting salary with either the hiring manager or the human resources manager. The intrinsic threat hypothesis predicts that men higher in PMB will negotiate more assertively in the Masculinity Threat condition (versus the No Threat condition) with both the hiring manager who perpetrated the masculinity threat *and* with the human resources manager who did not. The contextual threat hypothesis, however, predicts that men higher in PMB will negotiate more assertively in the Masculinity Threat condition (versus the No Threat condition) with the hiring manager who perpetrated the masculinity threat but *not* with the human resources manager who did not perpetrate or witness the masculinity threat.

I conducted my experiment using Mechanical Turk (MTurk), a web service sponsored by amazon.com that allows people to complete studies posted online. I limited my sample to

residents of the United States. MTurk has been shown to be as reliable as other sampling

methods for collecting survey data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011).

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

Participants

129 Male participants, ages 19 to 75 (*M*= 34.5, *SD*= 12.02) and residents of the United States were recruited using the Mechanical Turk (MTurk) participant pool. Participant ethnicities consisted of 110 White men, 7 African American Men, 3 Hispanic Men, and 9 Asian Men. To estimate minimum sample size, power analyses using G*Power 2 software (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007) were conducted with an assumed α of .05, power of .80 and a medium effect size (η^2 = .25). The power analysis indicated a need for a minimum of 120 participants, spread across four conditions. The present research employs a 2 (threat or not threat) x 2 negotiation partner (one-manager or two-manager) between subjects-factorial design.

Procedure

The present study closely replicates procedures used in Netchaeva et al.'s (2015) study. Upon beginning the study on MTurk, participants completed two separate and unrelated studies. The first study is described as a social attitudes survey. In the context of the study, participants completed Vandello et al.'s (2008) PMB scale participants 7-item *Precarious Manhood Beliefs Scale* (e.g., "It is fairly easy for a man to lose his status as a man"; "Some boys do not become men, no matter how old they get."). Participants responded on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), and item scores were averaged to yield overall scores wherein higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of hostile sexism or precarious manhood beliefs Cronbach's alpha was .82 for the PMB measure.

Next, participants completed a second study called the Salary Negotiation Study. Participants were informed that we were interested in examining strategies that people of different demographics and personalities use in salary negotiations. Participants imagined that they had just been hired at a publishing company. Participants watched a video of the hiring manager, Sarah, telling them about the company, their job and their responsibilities. Sarah stated the following:

Hello. I am Sarah, the manager in charge of hiring. Congratulations on being newly hired at Tallulah Press. We are glad to have you aboard. Before we begin the next step in the hiring process, I wanted to tell you a little about our company. We are a woman owned and operated publishing firm. We pride ourselves on ensuring that women have as many management opportunities as men and are most definitely an equal opportunity employer.

You have been hired to work on a team of editors for the non-fiction division of Tallulah Press. Our non-fiction division is made up of 7 different editor teams. For the next step in the hiring process, I have to determine which team you will best fit with. In order to do that, you will be asked to complete a personality inventory that will be examining some of your personality characteristics. Research has shown that editing teams made up people who create a well-balanced feminine and masculine personality dynamic tend to be the most productive. Therefore, the assessment you are about to complete will be examining how feminine or masculine your personality is.

In this context, Sarah then administered a personality inventory, which was an adaptation of Bem's (1974) Sex Role Inventory. Specifically, participants rated themselves on 20

personality dimensions (e.g., self-reliant, cheerful, athletic, understanding, compassionate, tender) using a scale ranging from 1 (*never true or almost never true*) to 7 (*always true or almost always true*). I did not compute scores for the Sex Role Inventory; we included it only as a way to manipulate the masculinity threat variable. Instructions informed participants that: "Scores on the personality inventory range from 0–50 with lower scores indicating greater femininity and higher scores indicating more masculinity."

I manipulated masculinity threat following a procedure similar to Glick et al. (2007). Then, Sarah informed participants in the masculinity-threat condition that their score on the personality inventory had been tabulated, and that, "Your score on the inventory was 18, which is close to the female average." She provided no feedback for participants in the No Threat condition.

In the one-manager condition, participants engaged in salary negotiations with the hiring manager, Sarah. Sarah appeared in a second video to begin the salary negotiation procedures. Sarah provided the following instructions:

> Together, you and I will be negotiating your starting salary. I will present you with a figure and you can either accept that figure or you can ask for a higher figure. We will negotiate up to five rounds together and by the fifth round you will either accept the salary or reject the position all together.

> Based on the results from the personality assessment that you took it has been suggested that you are placed on Team Four. You will be involved in the editing of non-fiction literature. I had a chance to look over your resume and credentials. It seems that you are fairly new to the field, with less than two years of professional experience, indicating that you are qualified for an entry-level salary. Below you will see the

guidelines for negotiating your salary. Please read them over closely. Once you indicate

that you understand the procedure, we can begin the negotiations.

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  ┌──────────┬──────────┬──────────┬──────────┐
$24,000    $28,500    $32,000    $35,000    $40,000
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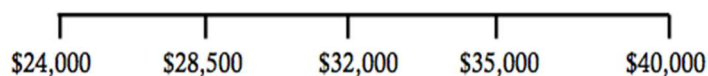
In the two-manager condition, participants engaged in salary negotiations with Anne, the

human resources manager who did not score their personality inventory or witness Sarah's

feedback. Anne, depicted by a different person in a video, presented the following instructions:

Hi. I am Anne, the human resources manager for Tallulah Press & Publishing.

Together, you and I will be negotiating your starting salary. I will present you with a

figure and you can either accept that figure or you can ask for a higher figure. We will

negotiate up to five rounds together and by the fifth round you will either accept the

salary or reject the position all together.

Based on the results from the personality assessment that you took with the hiring

manager, Sarah, it has been suggested that you are placed on Team Four. You will be

involved in the editing of non-fiction literature. I had a chance to look over your resume

and credentials. It seems that you are fairly new to the field, with less than two years of

professional experience, indicating that you are qualified for an entry-level salary.

Below you will see the guidelines for negotiating your salary. Please read them

over closely. Once you indicate that you understand the procedure, we can begin the

negotiations.

Participants then had the opportunity to either accept the salary offer or decline. If they choose to accept, the negotiation procedures ceased. If they declined, the participant was then asked to provide a numerical counteroffer to be shared with the hiring manager. Following the counteroffer, the manager responded with a higher an adjusted salary offer. The negotiations were allowed to proceed for up to five rounds. Symbolic aggression was represented by the number of rounds of salary negotiation engaged in by participant. Following the negotiation procedure, participants were asked to rate the hiring manager, Sarah, on a variety of different traits, such as likeability, helpfulness, and responsiveness.

Next, to provide a check for the masculinity threat manipulation, participants completed a word fragment completion task as an implicit measure of threat (Vandello et al., 2008). They completed 28 word fragments, of which 8 could have been completed to form aggression-related words (e.g., _ _ R D E R; murder). Finally, I asked participants to indicate the name and the position of the person with whom they negotiated a starting salary as a second manipulation check. Participants completed the dependent measures and then I debriefed them.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for PMB, implicit threat measure, the symbolic

aggression measure, and the hiring manager ratings as a function of experimental condition.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics for PMB, implicit threat measure, the symbolic aggression*

measure, and the hiring manager ratings as a function of experimental condition.

Masculinity threat		Sarah (Hiring Manager)	Anne (HR Manager)
Masculinity threat	PMB	3.50 (1.29)	3.41 (1.30)
	Implicit Threat	1.41 (0.19)	1.37 (0.15)
	Symbolic Agg.	4.07 (0.86)	4.50 (0.92)
	Ratings (of Sarah)	3.51 (0.58)	3.09 (0.75)
		n = 28	n = 38
No-Threat	PMB	3.64 (1.30)	3.44 (1.14)
	Implicit Threat	1.33 (0.14)	1.34 (0.15)
	Symbolic Agg.	4.17 (0.87)	4.15 (1.14)
	Ratings (of Sarah)	3.01 (0.73)	3.18 (0.70)
		n = 24	n = 39

Manipulation Check: Implicit Threat Measure

I tested the effectiveness of the masculinity threat manipulation by computing a one-way

analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the implicit threat measure with the masculinity threat

manipulation serving as a between-subjects variable. The ANOVA failed to reveal a significant

effect of masculinity threat, $F(1, 127) = 2.41$, $p = .12$.

Overview of Regression Analyses

To test the competing hypotheses, multiple regression analyses were performed on the measure of symbolic aggression favorability ratings of the hiring manager with the threat variable, negotiation partner variable and scores on the PMB scale serving as predictor variables. First, the two manipulated variables were effect coded. For the threat variable, the masculinity-threat condition was coded as "1" and the no-threat condition was coded as "-1". For the negotiation partner variable, the one-manager condition was coded "1" and the two-manager condition as "-1." Next, four interaction terms were created by computing the products of the effect coded variables and the PMB scores. PMB scores were standardized to guard against multicolinearity with interaction terms (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). I regressed the symbolic aggression measure and the favorability ratings onto the two effect-coded variables, the standardized PMB scores and the four interaction terms simultaneously.

Symbolic Aggression

The intrinsic threat hypothesis stated that to the extent men are higher in PMB, masculinity threats should negatively affect their intrinsic, stable definition of self. Therefore, the intrinsic threat hypothesis predicted a masculinity threat x PMB interaction effect. The effect of masculinity threat on symbolic aggression should differ for people who are high vs. low in PMB, and should not be moderated by the negation partner manipulation. That is, after experiencing masculinity threat, men higher in PMB should negotiate more aggressively with both the hiring manager and the human resources manager.

The contextual threat hypothesis stated that to the extent that men are high in PMB, masculinity threats only damage their self-concept only in the context of the specific relationship

or setting in which the threat occurs. Therefore, the contextual threat hypothesis predicted a masculinity threat x negotiation partner x PMB interaction effect.

Contrary to the intrinsic threat hypothesis, the regression analysis failed to reveal a significant masculinity threat x PMB interaction, $\beta = -.02$, $SE = .09$, $t = -.17$, $p = .86$. Moreover, the regression analysis also failed to support the contextual threat hypothesis; the masculinity threat x negotiation partner x PMB interaction effect was not significant, $B = -.112$, $SE = .063$, $t = -1.77$, $p = .080$. There was only a main effect of PMB, $B = -.176$, $SE = .086$, $t = -1.995$, $p = .048$. Contrary to previous research (Netchaeva et al., 2015), this finding reveals that as levels of PMB increased, men engaged in fewer negotiation rounds.

Hiring Manager Ratings

The intrinsic threat hypothesis predicted that participants higher in PMB would rate Sarah, the hiring manager who perpetrated a masculinity threat, equally as favorably when they negotiated their salary with either her or with Anne. In both cases, participants should not use the ratings of Sarah as a way to redeem their threatened masculinity. Thus, the intrinsic threat hypothesis predicts a significant main effect of PMB. In contrast, the contextual threat hypothesis predicted that participants higher in PMB would rate Sarah, the hiring manager who perpetrated a masculinity threat, more favorably when they negotiated their salary with her than when they negotiated their salary with Anne. There should be a significant PMB x masculinity threat x Manager condition interaction effect.

Relevant to the intrinsic threat hypothesis, the regression analyses revealed a non-significant main effect of PMB, $\beta = .154$, $SE = .06$, $t = 1.54$, $p = .08$. Also, relevant to the contextual threat hypothesis, the regression analyses failed to reveal a significant PMB x

masculinity threat x manager condition interaction effect, $\beta = -.143$, $SE = .06$, $t = -1.56$, $p = .121$. However, there emerged a significant masculinity threat x manager condition interaction effect, $\beta = -.213$, $SE = .06$, $t = -2.44$, $p = .016$. This finding reveals support for the notion that regardless of men's level of PMB, the masculinity threat influenced favorability ratings for the hiring manager, Sarah.

I conducted planned comparisons to further explore the masculinity threat x Manager condition interaction effect. Participants in the one-manager condition (Sarah) provided higher favorability ratings of Sarah ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .58$) than participants in the two-manager condition (Anne) ($M = 3.09$, $SD = .75$), $F (1, 125) = 5.90$, $p = .017$. Conversely, there were no significant differences in favorability ratings between participants in the no masculinity threat for the one-manager condition ($M = 3.01$, $SD = .73$) and the two-manager condition ($M = 3.18$, $SD = .70$), $F (1, 125) = .8662$, $p = .354$. The planned comparisons reveal that individuals who had the ability to engage in symbolic aggression toward Sarah ultimately rated her more favorably. This could be due in part to being able to express a build up of aggression resulting from receiving a masculinity threat from Sarah via the symbolic aggression measure. Those in the two-manager condition did not have the ability to aggress toward Sarah during the salary negotiation procedure and ultimately rated her more negatively.

Internal Analysis on the Symbolic Aggression Measure

An internal analysis is often conducted using nonrandom assignment based on participant responses to a manipulation check measure as a substitute for an independent variable. This type of procedure is implemented after an experimental manipulation has failed and participants in different conditions did not behave differently from one another (Carlsmith, Ellsworth, &

Aronson, 1976). In the present study, the manipulation check revealed that the masculinity threat manipulation has failed.

I performed a median split on the implicit measure of threat and participants were non-randomly assigned to either a high masculinity threat or low masculinity threat condition based on whether or not their implicit threat score placed either above or below the median implicit threat score. That is, participants who experienced threatened masculinity in the experiment are placed into the high threat condition, coded as -1, and those who did not experience a threatened masculinity are placed into a low threat condition, coded as 1.

Using the new groupings, I ran the same regression analyses described previously on symbolic aggression with the following predictors: the new masculinity threat variable (-1, 1), manager condition, PMB, and the four interaction effects. There were no significant effects related to either of the competing hypotheses.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Two competing hypotheses were tested, based on the previous literature: the intrinsic threat hypothesis and the contextual threat hypothesis. The intrinsic threat hypothesis states that to the extent men are higher in PMB, masculinity threats should negatively affect their intrinsic, stable definition of self. Conversely, the contextual threat hypothesis states to the extent that men are high in PMB, masculinity threats only damage their self-concept only in the context of the specific relationship or setting in which the threat occurs.

To test the competing hypotheses, I subjected both the symbolic aggression measure and favorability ratings of the hiring manager to a regression analysis with masculinity threat, the negotiation partner variable, the standardized PMB, and the two- and three-way interaction effects as predictors. The analysis revealed no significant main or interaction effects related to either of the competing hypotheses.

While not aligned with either hypothesis, I found a significant interaction effect of masculinity threat x manager condition on the favorability ratings measure. Planned comparisons revealed that individuals who received a threat to their masculinity in the one-manager condition rated Sarah more favorably than participant in the two-manager condition. Participants in the one-manager condition received the threatening feedback from Sarah and then had the opportunity to engage in a salary negotiation procedure, a form of symbolic aggression, with her. Previous research has shown that when men have the opportunity to engage in physical aggression following a threat to their masculinity, levels of anxiety associated with the experience of threat decrease (Bosson et al., 2009). Perhaps by negotiating their salary with Sarah, participants released anxiety by symbolically aggressing toward her, resulting in rating

her more favorably, compared to participants in the two-manager condition who did not have the opportunity to engage in symbolic aggression toward Sarah (Bosson et al., 2009).

I found no evidence that precarious manhood beliefs moderated the experience of masculinity threat. This raises the question about the experience of masculinity threat for those higher in PMB as opposed to those who are low in PMB. It is possible that men could experience a threat to masculinity regardless their level of PMB. Masculinity contingency, defined as the degree to which self-worth is contingent on identifying as masculine, suggests that the centrality of masculinity differs among men (Burkley, Wong, & Bell, 2016). It is probable that responses to masculinity threat may vary among men based on how central masculinity is to their identity.

This offers a potential explanation as to why PMB did not have a significant main or interaction effect when regressed onto both the symbolic aggression and manager favorability rating measures. However, the masculinity threat x manager condition did reveal significance when regressed on to the manager favorability rating measure. For those who have masculinity as central to their identity, regardless of level of PMB, an experience of threat to their masculinity could still have occurred.

Limitations and Future Directions

Future research should aim to explore the relationship between PMB and masculinity contingency in order to better understand the experience of masculinity threat. While correlations between the measures of PMB and masculinity contingency have been examined preliminarily (Goodwin, Myers, Holden, & Metcalf, 2017), this relationship is still in need of further exploration. It is possible that individuals who have high masculinity contingency are not

necessarily adhering to PMB and their experience of masculinity threats may differ from what previous research has discovered in regard to the experience of threat for men high in PMB.

Although the findings of the present study do make important contributions, it also has limitations. The most notable limitation of the present study was that the experimental manipulation failed and our experimental manipulation may not have created an experience of masculinity threat. This may have happened because PMT asserts that threats experienced for those with PMB tend to be greatest in actual social settings, where others are present (Vandello et al., 2008). Due to the present study using MTurk to run the experimental procedure, it is possible effectiveness of the experimental manipulation may have decreased.

Future research examining the experience of threats and responses to threats to masculinity may benefit from experimental procedures that involve real life social settings, as opposed to imagined scenarios. It is also possible that the implicit measure of threat used as a manipulation check was not necessarily the best at detecting levels of threat created by the experimental manipulation.

Summary and Conclusion

The present study set out to contribute to the existing literature on the experience of masculinity threat for men with PMB. Unfortunately, the results did not provide support to either the intrinsic or contextual threat hypothesis. Future research that addresses the limitations of the present study may continue to contribute to the growing field of masculinity research, particularly research attempting to further understand the experience of masculinity threat for men with precarious manhood beliefs.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Western Carolina University
Department of Psychology

Title of Project: Social Perceptions
Principle Investigator: Dr. Thomas Ford

Here are some questions you might have about this study.

What is the purpose of this research and what will be asked of me?
You will be participating in two different and unrelated studies for our social psychology lab.

Study 1: Social Attitudes Survey. For the first study, you will complete the Social Attitudes Study. The Social Attitudes Study consists of one survey designed to assess attitudes toward a number of different social issues and social groups. The first survey consists of 36 questions

Study 2: Salary Negotiation Study. For the second study, you will be asked to immerse yourself in a role-play scenario where you will be engaging in a salary negotiation for a position you have just been hired for. First, you will be asked by your interviewing manager to complete a survey that will help place you in the right team within the company. After, you will be asked to complete a quick word completion task to measure critical thinking skills. Next, you will be asked to negotiate your starting salary with either the interviewing manager or a second manager, who is in charge of hiring. Finally, you will be asked to evaluate the manager with whom you negotiated your salary with on a variety of domains.

How long will the research take?
The study in total should take about 25 to 30 minutes or so.

Will my answers be anonymous?
Yes. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information with your responses therefore the researchers cannot connect your identity with your responses.

Please see the following website for Amazon's MTurk privacy
policy: https://www.mturk.com/mturk/privacynotice. This notice describes Amazon's privacy

policy. By visiting the Amazon Mechanical Turk site, you are accepting the practices described in this Privacy Notice.

Can I withdraw from the study if I decide to?
Absolutely, and there is no penalty for stopping participation.

Is there any harm that I might experience from taking part in the study?
Some people may find some of the jokes and other parts of the study to be mildly offensive. Please remember you may discontinue your participation at any time. Also, please carefully read the debriefing that appears at the end of the experiment.

How will I benefit from taking part in the research?
You will receive monetary compensation ($.45) and have the satisfaction of knowing you've participated in research that we hope will contribute to the body of knowledge in social psychology. Your input will also help us to design future studies.

Who should I contact if I have questions or concerns about the research?
If you have any questions, you may contact Professor Thomas E. Ford, tford@wcu.edu. Also, if you have any concerns about how you were treated during the experiment, you may contact the office of the IRB, a committee that oversees the ethical aspects of the research process. The IRB office can be contacted at 828-227-7212. This research project has been approved by the IRB.

Appendix B: Ambivalent Sexism Inventory

Below is a series of statements concerning men and women and their relationships in contemporary society. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement using the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5
disagree	disagree	disagree	agree	agree	agree
strongly	somewhat	slightly	slightly	somewhat	strongly

_____ 1. No matter how accomplished he is, a man is not truly complete as a person unless he has the love of a woman.

_____ 2. Many women are actually seeking special favors, such as hiring policies that favor them over men, under the guise of asking for "equality."

_____ 3. In a disaster, women ought not necessarily be rescued before men.

_____ 4. Most women interpret innocent remarks or acts being sexist.

_____ 5. Women are too easily offended.

_____ 6. People are often truly happy in life without being romantically involved with a member of the opposite sex.

_____ 7. Feminists are not seeking for women to have more power than men.

_____ 8. Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess.

_____ 9. Women should be cherished and protected by men.

_____ 10. Most women fail to appreciate fully all that men do for them.

_____ 11. Women seek to gain power by getting control over men.

_____ 12. Every man ought to have a woman whom he adores.

_____ 13. Men are complete without women.

_____ 14. Women exaggerate problems they have at work.

_____ 15. Once a woman gets a man to commit to her, she usually tries to put him on a tight leash.

_____ 16. When women lose to men in a fair competition, they typically complain about being discriminated against.

_____ 17. A good woman should be set on a pedestal by her man.

_____ 18. There are actually very few women who get a kick out of teasing men by seeming sexually available and then refusing male advances.

_____ 19. Women, compared to men, tend to have a superior moral sensibility.

_____ 20. Men should be willing to sacrifice their own well being in order to provide financially for the women in their lives.

_____ 21. Feminists are making entirely reasonable demands of men.

_____ 22. Women, as compared to men, tend to have a more refined sense of culture and good taste.

Appendix C: Precarious Manhood Beliefs Scale

Please read each statement below and then indicate how true *you personally* believe it is by selecting one number from the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all true						Very true

1. It is fairly easy for a man to lose his status as a man.

2. A male's status as a 'real man' sometimes depends on how other people view him.

3. Some boys do not become men, no matter how old they get.

4. Other people often question whether a man is a 'real man'.

5. Manhood is something that can be taken away.

6. Manhood is not assured – it can be lost.

7. Manhood is not a permanent state, because a man might do something that suggests that he is really just a 'boy'.

Appendix D: Implicit Threat Measure

Word Completion

Please complete the following by filling letters in the blanks to create words. Write down the first word that comes to your mind. Fill in one letter per blank. Some words may be plural.

1.   M __ __ N
2.   __ O O K
3.   W A T __ __
4.   G U __
5.   B __ __ K
6.   P __ __ T U R E
7.   M O V __ __
8.   B A R __
9.   __ __ D E
10. K I __ __
11. T R __ __
12. C L __ __ K
13. __ __ A S S
14. __ I G H T

15. C H A __ __
16. B L O __ __
17. F O __ __
18. B __ T __ L E
19. D __ G
20. __ __ R D E R
21. F L __ W __ R
22. C H __ __
23. __ U N C H
24. __ __ __ __ B A L L
25. K __ __ G S
26. C O __ __ S
27. S T A __
28. H O __ __ E

Aggression words: 4, 10, 14, 16, 18, 20, 23, 27

Gun, kick/kill, fight, blood, battle, murder, punch, stab

Appendix E: Debriefing

Debriefing

There's more to this study than you were told in the beginning. We will take this opportunity to tell you the true purpose of our study.

First, I want to explain why we didn't tell you everything about the study from the beginning. Social psychology studies are designed to examine how people spontaneously react to certain situations or events. But sometimes, if participants know what we're studying from the beginning or know the hypotheses from the beginning it can affect the way they respond. For instance, often people give us responses they think we want them to give. If that happens our results could be misleading. We wouldn't get an idea of how people spontaneously respond in a given situation.

Social psychologists have found that when men experience a threat to their masculinity (e.g., behave in ways that could be construed as feminine) they often compensate by engaging in "hyper masculine" behaviors. The purpose of our study was to examine whether masculinity threat would affect how men respond to salary negotiations and female managers.

In our study, we manipulated whether male participants experienced a masculinity threat by providing **FALSE** feedback on a personality inventory. In the "masculinity threat" condition, participants were told that their scores indicated that they had more feminine personalities. In the "no masculinity threat" condition, participants were told that they had masculine

personalities.

The important thing to note now is that the feedback was FALSE. The "personality inventory" did not actually measure one's masculinity or femininity. We used the personality inventory only as a way to create the experience of masculinity threat so we could study how masculinity threat affects how men respond to salary negotiations and female managers.

Thank you very much for taking time to participate in this study. We really appreciate it.